

**56th ANNUAL MEETING REPORT  
VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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# THE VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## PREFACE

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) was established by VA Circular No. 117, May 17, 1946, and became a Federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1975. The Committee advises the Under Secretary for Health on matters pertaining to the participation of volunteers in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities. Committee membership is open to all national organizations that provide volunteers or donations to VA medical facilities and meet or exceed minimum criteria established by the NAC. Current membership categories and criteria for the NAC are:

1. Service Member (voting) -- maintains the provision of volunteers and VA recognized participation on local VAVS committees at a minimum of thirty VA facilities;
2. Associate Service Member -- maintains the same requirements as Service Members but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities;
3. Donor Member -- donates significant funds or materials to assist or benefit veterans at a minimum of thirty VA facilities; and
4. Associate Donor Member -- maintains the same requirements as Donor Members but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities.

The Chairperson of the NAC is the Chief Communications Officer, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Deputy Chairperson is the Director, Voluntary Service Office, VHA. Each member organization may appoint one National Representative and up to eight Deputy Representatives to serve on the NAC. A member organization may also certify individuals to represent it on local VA facility VAVS Committees where its members actively volunteer.

The NAC meets annually in the spring and its members attend at their personal or their organization's expense. The Executive Committee (EC) of the NAC meets during the VAVS Annual NAC and again in the fall. NAC meetings are open to the public. Advance notice of the purpose, date, time and location of each NAC and EC meeting is published in the Federal Register.

## **Service Member Organizations**

(P indicates present and A indicates absent)

<b><u>Service Member</u></b>	<b>Present/Absent</b>	
American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc. (EX-POW)	P	
American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. (AGSM)	P	
The American Legion (AL)	P	
The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA)	P	
The American Red Cross (ARC)	P	
AMVETS (AMVETS)	P	
AMVETS Auxiliary (AMVETS Aux.)	P	
American War Mothers (AWM)	P	
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the U.S.A. (BPOE)	P	
Catholic War Veterans (CWV)	P	
Catholic War Veterans Ladies Auxiliary (CWVA)		A
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	P	
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA)	P	
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Fleet Reserve Association (FRAA)	P	
The Forty and Eight (40/8)	P	
Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. Inc. (JWV)	P	
National Ladies Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., Inc. (JWVA)	P	
Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA)	P	
Marine Corps League (MCL)	P	
Marine Corps League Auxiliary (MCLA)	P	
The Masonic Service Association of the U.S. (MSA)		A
Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S. (MOC)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S. (MOCA)	P	
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc. (MOPH)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc. (MOPHA)	P	
National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century (NSCDC)		A
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)		A
Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)	P	
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A. (PLAV)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A. (PLAVA)	P	
The Salvation Army (SA)	P	
The Sons of the American Legion (SAL)	A	
United Voluntary Services (UVS)	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFW)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFWA)	P	
U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II (SVWWII)		A
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. (VVA)	P	
WAVES National (WAVES)	P	
Women's Army Corps Veterans Association (WACV)	P	

## **Service Member Organizations**

(P indicates present and A indicates absent)

**Present/Absent**

### **Associate Service Member Organizations**

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFS)		A
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)		A
Blinded Veterans (BV)	P	
Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War (DUVCW)	P	
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. (GSW)	P	
Honor Society Women Legionnaires (Twenty and Four)		A
The Improved, Benevolent, Protective Order of Elks of the World, Inc. (BPOE)	P	
Italian American War Veterans of the U.S. (IAWV)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Italian American War Veterans of the U.S. (IAWVA)	P	
National Ladies Auxiliary, Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc. (VWWIA)	P	
The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR)		A
The National Women's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic (GARA)	P	
Navy Mothers' Club of America (NMC)		A
Sons of AMVETS (SAMVETS)	P	
Supreme Cootiette Club of the U.S. (SCC)	P	
Women Marines Association (WMA)	P	

### **Donor Member Organizations**

Bowlers Victory League (BVL)	P
Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV)	P
Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project (HVWP)	P

### **Honorary Member Organizations**

B'NAI B'rith	A
JWB/Women's Organizations' Services (JWB/WOS)	A
National Auxiliary, United Spanish War Veterans (SWV)	A
National Service Star Legion (SSL)	A
Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc. (VWWI)	A

**VAVS NAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, May 15, 2002 - 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Executive Committee (EC) Chairperson, Lt. Col. Mary Jones, The Salvation Army. Attendees: The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, AMVETS, AMVETS Auxiliary, Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, Disabled American Veterans, Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S., Military Order of the Purple Heart, United Voluntary Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., and Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Jim Delgado, Director, Voluntary Service Office and Deputy Chairman of the VAVS NAC, VA Central Office (VACO); Laura Balun, Administrative Officer, VACO; Steve Moynihan, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Medical Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Steve Reid, Program Specialist, VACO; and Diane Heffington, Voluntary Service Specialist, VACO. Absentees: The American Red Cross, Masonic Service Association of the U.S., National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

**Agenda Review/Call for Revisions:** The only revision to the EC meeting agenda was presented by Lt. Col. Mary Jones. The section entitled "2002-2003 Subcommittee Appointments" under "New Business" will be moved to "Old Business" and be titled "Review of Subcommittee Appointments." Mike Manning, BPOE, moved that the agenda, as revised, be accepted. Bill Bryce, MOC, seconded. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried.***

After approving the agenda, it was noted that under "Subcommittee Reports," the National Advisory Committee/Standard Operating Procedures (NAC/SOP) report needed to be added. Mike Manning moved that the agenda, with the new revision, be accepted. Pat Cody, MCL, seconded. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried.***

**Goals and Objectives:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones read the goals and objectives of the VAVS NAC Executive Committee:

1. To act as the governing body of the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) in this interim period between Annual Meetings;
2. To be supportive of the NAC's primary objective of advising VA on how to coordinate and promote volunteer activities within VA facilities and matters relating to volunteerism;
3. To be apprised of programmatic issues pending within Voluntary Service and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Central Office since the 2001 Annual Meeting and to hold discussion on any appropriate advisory actions necessary;
4. To plan Executive Committee supportive actions to ensure follow-up on issues or business items from the 2001 Annual Meeting;
5. To receive an update from the James H. Parke Memorial Foundation Board President concerning the Youth Scholarship program;
6. To receive an update from VAVS Partners, Inc. concerning the Annual Meeting;

7. To assess the 2002 Annual Meeting, finalize plans for the 2003 Annual Meeting, and address site selection for 2004 and 2005 Annual Meetings;
8. To receive reports from the Recommendations Subcommittee, Volunteer of the Year Nomination Subcommittee, and Ad Hoc Committee for SOP Revision Subcommittee;
9. To update the NAC (SOP) as deemed necessary;
10. To discuss, as a group, any area within the VAVS program in need of additional progress.

**Host's Welcome:** Ann Marie Murphy, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Portland VAMC, welcomed everyone, and stated that there are handouts on the information table in the registration area about the Portland area and the shuttle schedule.

**56th Annual Meeting Agenda Overview:** Presentation by Steve Moynihan, and Laura Balun, NAC Annual Meeting Planners. The program booklets display the full agenda. Mr. Moynihan reviewed the agenda in detail, describing the sessions and their locations. He also reviewed the hotel services, including transportation. Ms. Balun announced that Gerald McRaney would be unable to attend, but that Dana Bowman will be here on Saturday in celebration of Armed Forces Day.

**Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of October 29 and 30, 2001:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones called for corrections or additions to the minutes. Andrew Nagy, Deputy National Representative, 40 and 8, pointed out that there were people present at the meeting whose names do not appear under "Others in Attendance." Mr. Delgado, stated that the only attendance acknowledged and required is that of the membership. Guests that make presentations to the committee are also identified. The meetings are open to the public but there is no sign-in sheet; therefore, members of the public are not listed in the minutes.

Bill Bryce, moved that the minutes be accepted as presented. Bill Bradshaw, VFW, seconded. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried.***

**Remarks with Q&A:** Jim W. Delgado, reported that the Voluntary Service program has increased visibility in VACO and tremendous support from the leadership. Meetings have been held with Secretary Principi, Deputy Secretary Mackay and Dr. Roswell, on the status and well-being of the VAVS program and its potential to continue to be successful in the future. While there are tremendous challenges in meeting the needs of veterans under our care now, we also have to plan to be there for the veterans of tomorrow.

One of the things that has kept the visibility of Voluntary Service high in VACO was President Bush's statement in his State of the Union Address. He called Americans to volunteer to serve their country for an equivalent of two years, or 4,000 hours over a lifetime. The consequence of that has been visible in the plans for expanding AmeriCorps, VISTA, the Citizen Corps, and a number of initiatives tied to what we know as the USA Freedom Corps.

The VACO staff has been very busy; primarily focused on recruitment. They have developed a new media kit, redesigned the existing five brochures, and developed four new posters for recruitment. A Recruitment Plan for Voluntary Service has been initiated, focusing primarily on what VA staff and local VAVS programs should do to address this issue. Recruitment is not just about numbers, he emphasized; the important point is to meet the needs of our patients in each of our facilities. Health care is changing, which

provides opportunity for new and non-traditional roles for volunteers, and it is vital that our volunteers keep pace with the changes.

The Veterans History Project will provide opportunities to expand volunteer participation, and Mr. Delgado requests that every organization become involved in this project which provides an opportunity to involve more young people, and affords us an opportunity to make the veteran community more visible.

Last year the challenge was issued for everyone to recruit one volunteer before the next Annual Meeting. Some of the VAVS organizations have an active recruitment program within their membership. VACO is doing everything possible to work with the field staff to meet the challenge. The help and support of the member organizations of the NAC is needed.

Mr. Delgado requested questions and comments from the committee. Frank DeWitt, National Deputy Representative, stated his organization, MOPH, is actively recruiting ROTC personnel. Bill Bryce, commented that he has found that once a person goes to the VA, nine times out of ten that person will return as a volunteer. Miriam Jaffee, National Representative, JWV, requests a program to bring people in for a one-time event and then hopefully they'll stay on as volunteers. Andrew Nagy, spoke of having booths for recruiting volunteers at public functions. Peggy Thomas, National Representative, ALA, stated that in The American Legion Auxiliary bulletins go out constantly asking for volunteers (from the national level all the way down). A discussion ensued on the relationship and communication between the national offices of the organizations and the grassroots members. Miriam Jaffee suggested that the Annual Joint Review would be a good mechanism for instituting change. Comments were made by committee members regarding recruiting volunteers in their organizations and the resources available, whether they be monetary or in human involvement.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

**Recommendations Subcommittee:** Mike Manning, Chairman reported on the eight recommendations, reviewed at the October 2001 meeting, which are pending action by the VAVS NAC during its 56th Annual Meeting. [The complete text of the recommendations appears under the Recommendations Subcommittee report of the May 16, 2002 Business Session.]

The recommendations will be presented to the NAC in the Saturday's business session and voted on at that time. Lt. Col. Mary Jones called for a motion. Jeff Dolezal, National Deputy Representative, PVA, moved that the Recommendations be approved as read. Judith McCombs, National Representative, VVA, seconded. *The vote was unanimous; motion carried.*

**NAC Volunteer of The Year Subcommittee:** Presented by Lt. Col. Mary Jones, Chairperson. The winners will be honored on Saturday in the morning business session and again during the evening banquet. The Female NAC Volunteer of The Year is Veronica Spence from San Francisco, an ALA volunteer. The Male NAC Volunteer of The Year is Herbert Rettke from Oklahoma City, a BPOE volunteer. Both persons will be present to accept their awards.

**Membership Subcommittee:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones stated that Ed Rose, National Representative, MSA, who missed this meeting because of surgery, did not submit a report. The members of this subcommittee are Marie Dunlap, National Representative, UVS; Bill Bradshaw, and Rosetta Quartarone, National Representative, VFWA.

**Recruitment Subcommittee:** The Chair, Carol Williams, National Representative, ARC, is delayed in arriving at the meeting. Jim Fischl, National Representative, AL; Pam Thomas, National Representative, NSDAR; and Donna Tanner, National Representative, DAVA, are members of the committee. Donna Tanner presented the report, including the organization of the committee, the mission statement, the SOP, and outlined in detail the recommendations for recruitment.

**VAVS Partners, Inc. Update:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones presented the report. All members of the NAC make up the corporation, VAVS Partners, Inc., and the members of the Executive Committee are the Board of Directors.

The seven officers are:  
Lt. Col. Mary Jones, President  
Jeff Dolezal, Vice-President.  
Pat Cody, Secretary  
Jerry Butler, Treasurer  
Mike Manning, Member  
Martha Knott, Member  
Fred Burns, Member

The SOP was reviewed at the October meeting and a few changes were made. Lt. Col. Mary Jones called on Pat Cody, the Secretary, to give the minutes of that meeting.

Mr. Cody, read the minutes of the October 29, 2001 of the VAVS Partners, Inc., held at VACO. Lt. Col. Mary Jones, opened the VAVS Partners, Inc. meeting at 8:30 a.m. Copies of the proposed VAVS Partners, Inc. (SOP) were made to attendees. There were several spelling corrections and minor deletions made. This was followed by a general discussion. A question was raised on a quorum and by-laws and revision section. More discussion followed. Motion by Mike Manning to approve the minutes as read, seconded by Ed Hartman, National Representative, DAV, that the VAVS Partners, Inc. SOP be adopted with the editorial changes. Motion carried. Under officers: Jerry Butler, National Deputy Representative, FRA; Pat Cody. The following were added: Martha Knott, National Representative, AMVETS; Fred Burns, National Deputy Representative, VFW; and Mike Manning. The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m., October 29, 2001.

Judith McCombs, and Mike Manning, reviewed the changes to the SOP on October 30 prior to the regular NAC meeting. Mike Manning will make the corrections and the revised copies will be sent to VACO for distribution to all members of the VAVS Partners, Inc.

The following organizations have been appointed to the committee in 2002 for two years: Marine Corps League, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purples Heart, AMVETS, and American Red Cross. The Forty-and-Eight and the Submarine Veterans of World War II will be rotating off of the committee.

Lt. Col. Mary Jones requested a motion to adjourn the Executive Committee meeting in order to convene a meeting of the VAVS Partners, Inc. Bill Bryce moved. Judith McCombs pointed out that it should be a motion to "recess," not to "adjourn." Mr. Bryce accepted the amendment. Judith McCombs seconded the motion to recess the Executive Committee. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried.***

(Recess.)



(Whereupon, the meeting of the NEC was resumed.)

**VAVS NAC Membership Report:** Ms. Laura Balun, presented the NAC March 2002 member organization data, which is a compilation of the NAC member organizations and their status during the first six months of fiscal year 2002 (October 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002). It is requested that the members review the VHA 37 and VHA 49 reports when they arrive and, if there are any discrepancies, inform the Voluntary Service Office.

A letter will be sent to the following organizations to remind them of the membership criteria and that they may lose their membership or that it may move from Service Membership (30 facilities) to Associate Membership: Submarine Veterans of World War II are Service Members now, and are two away from being dropped to Associate Member; Sons of AMVETS became a member last year; they are stable but just two away from the 15 criteria; Navy Mothers Club of America is at 10; National Women's Relief Corps is at 14; Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War are at 15.

Letters were sent to the United Auto Workers; Kiwanis; Telephone Pioneers of America and The Loyal Order of the Moose in October. An application has been received from The Loyal Order of the Moose and they have been added as an Associate Service member.

**National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Report:** Presented by Ms. Laura Balun. The 2002 Salute Chairperson is Gerald McRaney. He has visited four facilities this year and participated in a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. Ms. Balun showed the video narrated by Gerald McRaney as a tribute to VA nurses in celebration of Nurse's Week.

The Voluntary Service office continues to be creative in providing opportunities for the community to share in paying tribute to the nation's veterans, to witness the quality of services provided within the VA, and to provide an opportunity to recruit volunteers. One hundred and fifty-five National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Reports were submitted by the field facilities and were reviewed. Approximately 1,342,703 valentines were received at the medical centers. Veteran inpatients and outpatients (87,807) were visited during National Salute Week by 43,521 people. There were 921 reported media events; over 235 TV spots, 535 printed articles, and 151 radio spots throughout the country. This continues to be one of the most productive weeks of the year for recruitment; with 953 volunteers recruited during the week of February 14th.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

**2003 Annual Meeting Update:** Mr. Steve Moynihan reported that the meeting would be held at the Radisson in Indianapolis, Indiana, April 30-May 3. The room rate is \$95, plus 11 percent tax, which will be \$105.45 per night. A more in-depth report will be provided on Saturday. Jim Fischl also provided information on the location.

**Future Annual Meeting Plans - 2004 and 2005:** The 2004 meeting will be held in Orlando, at the Rosen Plaza (previously the Clarion) May 26-30. The room rate is \$95.20, including tax, parking is complimentary. Mr. Moynihan described the property, the location and transportation.

At the October 2001 meeting there was a discussion regarding multi-year contracts; therefore, Orlando was included in the 2005 consideration. The Rosen Plaza will give a very reasonable rate

for two years under a multi-year contract. At the committee's request, the per diem criteria was eliminated when seeking rates for the 2005 meeting. The rates came in higher than the government rate. The Rosen Plaza gave a rate below the per diem rate for 2004, and they will continue that rate for 2005. The dates for the Rosen Plaza are May 1-8 or June 5-12, 2005.

For San Antonio the St. Anthony Hotel responded, at a rate of \$91 plus 16.75 % city and local tax for May 15-23, 2005. For Austin, Texas: the Renaissance Austin Hotel quoted \$80, exclusive of tax, for March 20-March 28; and the Hyatt Regency Austin for May 8-16, 2005 at the prevailing government rate of \$80 plus 15 percent tax. Two proposals were received from Phoenix, Arizona: the Sheraton Hotel & Convention Center in Mesa is \$79 plus 11.27 percent tax for May 15-23, and the DoubleTree Paradise Valley Resort in Scottsdale at a rate of \$99 plus 11.67 percent tax. Ms. Balun described the location, transportation and parking of each location.

Mr. Bill Bryce made a motion to explore Orlando, Florida as the first choice and Mesa, Arizona as the second for the 2005 Annual Meeting. Mr. Manning brought up that holding the meeting in the same city two years in a row defeats the original purpose of rotating the Annual Meetings. Mr. Bryce amended his motion to Orlando as the first and San Antonio as the second. Mr. James Fischl and Lt. Col. Mary Jones felt the motion was premature and Mr. Bryce withdrew his motion. After discussion, Mr. Bryce made a motion for Orlando and Mesa, Arizona (the Phoenix area) to be visited for potential locations. Mr. Jeff Dolezal seconded the motion. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried.***

**Fall 2002 EC Meeting:** Ms. Balun reported that the federal per diem rate has increased in the Washington, DC area. The two options proposed for this meeting are: Washington, D.C., October 20th and 21st or the 27th and 28th at a rate of \$149, or Indianapolis at a rate of \$95 for the same dates.

Mr. Bill Bryce made a motion that the EC Meeting for 2002 be held in Indianapolis. Mr. Jeff Dolezal, seconded the motion. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried.***

**2002-2003 Subcommittee Appointments:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones reviewed the appointments and urged the committees to continue to conduct business between this meeting and the October meeting.

Recommendations Subcommittee: Mike Manning, Chair; Ed Hartman and Judith McCombs.

Volunteer of the Year: Lt. Col. Mary Jones, Chair, Mike Manning, and Jeff Dolezal.

Membership Subcommittee: Ed Rose, Chair, Marie Dunlap, Bill Bradshaw, and Rosetta Quartarone.

Recruitment Subcommittee: Carol Williams, Chair, Jim Fischl, Pam Thomas, and Donna Tanner.

### **New Business:**

**NAC Report:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones, reported that out of 60 member organizations only 20 sent in their reports. Most of the reports mentioned accepting Mr. Delgado's challenge from last year and were promoting that within their organizations, with varying degrees of results. Recruitment and retention are the main focus, and the organizations are working on that. Frustrations were expressed, such as not receiving the minutes in a timely manner, not receiving the Annual Joint Reviews, and being requested to send Annual Joint Reviews that went to the medical center rather than to the representative.

**Good of the Order:** Judith McCombs had three matters: The mixed color ribbons EC members are wearing; the National Representative for the CWVA expressed their dismay on having the Annual Meeting in conflict with their meeting Ms. McCombs, explained the meeting process to this organization); Ms. McCombs, expressed her gratitude to the meeting planners for their efforts to accommodate all of the participant requests.

Mr. Jeff Dolezal made a motion for adjournment; Pat Cody seconded the motion. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried.*** Lt. Col. Mary Jones declared the meeting adjourned.

### **REPRESENTATIVE/DEPUTY TRAINING AND ORIENTATION WORKSHOP Wednesday, May 15, 2002 - 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**

Mr. Keith Butcher, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA NY Harbor Healthcare System Brooklyn Campus, and Ms. Judith McCombs, conducted the (National Representative/Deputy Training and Orientation Workshop), which have been extended to include local VAVS information. This workshop provides an opportunity for the National and Local Representatives to better understand their responsibilities respectively, and how they interface.

Mr. Butcher and Ms. McCombs spoke in detail about the purpose of the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service, the National Advisory Committee, local committees, membership categories for the National Representatives/Deputies and Local Representatives/Deputies and their duties, responsibilities, and certification criteria. Ms. McCombs described the "circular partnership" which is the heart and soul of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the VAVS. The organizational chart of the VAVS within the VHA was reviewed. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the Annual Joint Review.

Mr. Butcher spoke about the changes in health care and volunteer opportunities, and about the future of American's veterans in VA health care centers around the country. Ms. McCombs closed the meeting, restating VAVS' mission. Its mission is to provide a structured Volunteer Program under the management of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensated employees in cooperation with community resources to serve America's veterans and their families with dignity and compassion; and to improve the quality of life of the veteran patient population.

**OPEN FORUM**  
**Wednesday, May 15, 2002 - 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.**

**Opening Remarks:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones opened the meeting by describing the purpose of the Open Forum, which is to help inform the National Representatives and Deputies of all business pending at the 56th annual meeting and to provide for an informal review of that business prior to the Business Sessions. This meeting provides an opportunity to achieve maximum open communication between the National Representatives and Deputies, the Voluntary Service field and VACO staff.

**Introductions:** The Voluntary Service staff in attendance introduced themselves.

**Overview of 56th Annual Meeting:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones reviewed the agenda and associated activities of the Annual Meeting. She introduced Mr. James H. Holley, Chief Communications Officer and Chairman of the National Advisory Committee.

**Current Issues/Concerns within VAVS:** Jim W. Delgado spoke of his pride in the accomplishments of the VAVS program and the people involved, and he expressed his gratitude to the staff present for all their hard work.

Mr. Delgado encouraged everyone to actively pursue the policies delineated in VHA Handbook 1620.3, which is for the purpose of recognizing the volunteer participation in State Veterans Homes (SVH) in the VAVS timekeeping system. Mr. Delgado gave an overview of his meetings with Secretary Principi, Deputy Secretary Mackay and Dr. Roswell and the expanded visibility of the VAVS Program. He stated that concerted efforts to expand the volunteer program beyond health care delivery and into arenas such as the National Cemetery Administration and the VA Regional Offices in VBA, and community-based volunteer programs.

Mr. Delgado emphasized the importance of effective and open communication.

Mr. Delgado took questions from the attendees. Discussion ensued on matters relating to:

- Annual Joint Reviews
- Representative and Deputy Representative and responsibilities
- Committee meeting minutes
- CBOC contracts
- State Veterans Homes
- Recruitment of younger veterans as volunteers
- The role of the chiefs at the hospitals
- Prescriptions through the mail
- Selection of chiefs or program managers
- Counting of volunteer hours
- Establishment of additional VAVS committees
- Communication between the National and Local Representatives.

Lt. Col. Mary Jones requested that the National Representatives notify the registration desk if either their National Commander or President is in attendance at this Annual Meeting so that they may be recognized. She then adjourned the meeting.

## **OPENING CEREMONIES**

### **Wednesday, May 15, 2002 - 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** The 56th Annual Meeting of the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee was called to order by Lt. Col. Mary Jones.

**Presentation of Colors:** The Colors were presented by the Northwest Indian Veterans Association. Dan Foster gave a brief presentation on the Northwest Indian Veterans Association.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Barbara Weatherill, Non Commissioned Officers Association, Chairman of the Portland VAVS Executive Committee.

**Invocation:** The invocation was delivered by Col. Alice Speck, SA.

**Introductions:** The attendees seated at the head table were introduced by Lt. Col. Mary Jones: Col. Alice Speck, Dr. James Tuchschiidt, Chief Executive Officer, Portland VA Medical Center; Dr. Leslie M. Burger, Acting Network Director, VISN 20; Mr. James H. Holley, Mr. Jim Delgado.

Lt. Col. Mary Jones expressed appreciation to the meeting planners and the Portland VA Medical Center, the host facility, for their commitment to make this meeting successful.

**Welcome:** Dr. James Tuchschiidt welcomed the attendees to Portland, The City of Roses, and gave his thanks to the volunteers for their service to our veterans. Richard W. Blizzard, Prime Minister of the Portland Royal Rosarians, the official ambassadors from the Portland Rose Society and the City of Portland, welcomed everyone on behalf of the Mayor of the City of Portland and the Queen of Rosaria. A certificate from the Society was presented to Dr. Roswell; Mr. James H. Holley accepted the certificate.

Dr. Leslie M. Burger, Acting Network Director, VISN 20, added his welcome. He described the Northwest Network and the facilities.

**Opening Remarks:** Presented by James H. Holley.

Mr. Holley asked everyone at this meeting to focus on this question: **Who do we serve and what do they need?** Veterans' needs should be continually evaluated. Mr. Holley presented a video, which was produced by Fox Television for the VFW after they complained about the way veterans were portrayed on the television series "King of the Hill."

Since 1997 VAVS has lost 14,000 volunteers. The job is still getting done, but there are fewer people doing the same amount of work, and perhaps even more. This is very serious and needs to be addressed now. More volunteers are needed, but they won't be recruited by concentrating on a numerical goal, they will be recruited by looking for the answer to **Who do we serve and what do they need?** and then by establishing new and exciting volunteer assignments to fit those needs. The way the delivery of care is changing is actually showing us the way to attract volunteers, such as community based care, home care,

non-institutional care. Veterans are interested in maintaining as great a level of functional independence for as long as possible; the home care setting is very conducive to this and volunteers can help veterans to do that.

The important task before us is reversing the trend of declining volunteerism. The Secretary, the Under-Secretary, the VAVS Central Office staff and all the VAVS staff in the field are committed to it. It's about the viability of the system and what level of care the veterans will receive, about the very survival of the system. We have new tools to help, such as the new corporate and student volunteer packets, four new recruitment posters, promoting volunteerism through the USA Freedom Corps, AmeriCorps, and faith-based initiatives. We are involved in the Veterans History Project, and the Recruitment Strategies Task Group has developed a comprehensive and ambitious Voluntary Service recruitment strategy.

**Keynote Address:** Mr. Holley informed the audience that Dr. Robert Roswell, Under-Secretary for Health, was unable to attend the conference and pre-recorded a video message to the audience.

"Thank you for inviting me to join you in Portland. I had every intention of being there in person until I was called to testify tomorrow at a hearing at the House of Representatives on medical research. As I stated at my swearing-in ceremony here in Washington last week, I am privileged and honored to head the system that assures that the health care needs of our veterans are met with the highest quality of care available. Repeating my pledge of that day, I will do everything in my power to sustain and nurture the system so that it will be ready when current and future generations of veterans are in need.

"But I need your help to help me keep that pledge. Volunteers are vital to VA health care and to the well-being of our patients. We need to expand the VAVS program and the number of volunteers. However, it's not just about the number of volunteers or the hours of service. We must ensure that programs are in place to meet patient needs in an ever-changing health care environment. We must support volunteer programs that improve access and promote patient satisfaction and customer service. We need to work together to increase support from veteran service organizations and other VAVS organizations. When we do, we increase awareness of the VA health care system and the veteran and civic organizations that support the system, thereby helping to increase the membership of participating organizations and the volunteer resources in our facilities.

"The VAVS program is very important to the future of VA health care. Working together we must develop a strategic plan for the communications that will maximize the potential of the program and its participants and stimulate the recruitment of new volunteers. No statement better captures the achievements we've seen in VA's health care system over the past several years than a quote from a December article on the front page of the Wall Street Journal. These are the words of a Rand Corporation official: "What's needed in the U.S. is nothing short of a medical revolution, and the Veterans Health Administration has gone further than most any other organization to revamp its culture and systems." The transformation of the VA health care system is indeed landmark. In almost every measure the VHA leads private and other government health care providers. We achieve this in the face of significant financial challenge and hard budget decisions. That speaks to the caring and commitment of our VA health care staff and the volunteers who support them. We've come to lead the health care industry not only in the areas of specialized care for which VA is so well known, but also in many other important areas like patient safety, health promotion and disease prevention, computerized patient medical records, tele-medicine and clinical and health services research.

"VA volunteers have been and will continue to be very special partners in our efforts to preserve quality and ensure that no veterans fall through the cracks of our health care system. We will work together to maximize all available resources and continue to provide the full spectrum of high-quality health care to

veterans who are enrolled with VA. Make no mistake concerning the broad scope of responsibility in this partnership; what the VA health care system does concerns not only the health and well-being of veterans, but also the strength of the nation. We are carrying out a promise, and in the process we have become integral to the country's health in direct care, in research, in education, and in homeland security. Through the dedication of thousands of VA employees and volunteers, we will meet these challenges. Our greatest resource is the talent and ingenuity of the people who report to our VA facilities each day.

"I know you'll have a rewarding conference. I thank you for the welcome I received in my new position, and I look forward to meeting with you in the days ahead as we work together to make certain our veterans receive the very best possible care. Thank you."

(Applause.)

Lt. Col. Mary Jones announced that a roll call of the member organizations would be conducted during tomorrow's Business Session, which will also include the NAC Report, the Organization's Commitment, the VAVS Report, the subcommittee reports, and a presentation on the Veterans History Project. The registration desk should be informed of the national presidents and national commanders in attendance so that they can be introduced. The entertainment at this evening's reception will be provided by CUL-AN-TI. She encouraged everyone to take a moment and view the Native American artwork which is displayed in the foyer.

### **BUSINESS SESSION**

**Thursday, May 16, 2002 - 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by NAC Chairperson, Lt. Col. Mary Jones. She expressed appreciation to AL, the DAV, the PVA and the VFW for sponsoring yesterday evening's reception, and Ann Marie Murphy and the other meeting hosts for arranging the wonderful entertainment. She also expressed appreciation to the VFW and Auxiliary. for this morning's continental breakfast.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Ann Barrie, ALA, VAVS Representative, Portland VA Medical Center, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introductions:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones introduced the participants at the head table: Mr. James H. Holley, Mr. Jim W. Delgado, Ms. Donna Tanner, Recruitment Subcommittee member; and Mr. Mike Manning, Chairman of the Recommendations Subcommittee.

**Roll Call:** The purpose of the formal roll call of the National Representatives and Deputy Representatives of the member organizations in attendance ensures that VAVS is complying with the policy in VHA Handbook 1620.1. In that regard, Lt. Col. Mary Jones called the roll for the 2002 Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Service Members, Associate Service Members, Donor Members, and Honorary Members. (See page three for attendance record.)

**Goals and Objectives:** The following are the Goals and Objectives for the 56th Annual Meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee:

1. Provide the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities charged by its charter.
2. Provide committee orientation to Local and National VAVS Representatives and Deputies.
3. Present all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VAVS policies and procedures.
4. Accommodate full and open communication among the member organizations, representatives and Voluntary Service Central Office and field staff.
5. Provide the Committee's member organizations with educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs, with special emphasis on methods to recruit, retain, motivate and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the Committee's member organizations the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department.
7. Arrange for Committee review of and action on its pending recommendations.
8. Honor the national recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, Mr. Adam Brown, student volunteer at the Eastern Kansas Healthcare System, Topeka, Kansas.
9. To honor the Male and Female VAVS Volunteers of the Year, Mr. Herbert Rettke, VA Medical Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Mrs. Veronica Spence, VA Medical Center, San Francisco, California.
10. Recognize Michael Coningham, Chief, Voluntary Service at the VA Medical Center, Bay Pines, Florida as the recipient of the Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.

**Report of Member Organizations:** This Annual Meeting marks the fourth year since the San Francisco brainstorming session, *VAVS Voyages Through the Millennium: A Galaxy of Opportunities in Volunteerism*. Since that annual meeting, each member organization has been asked to report on their accomplishments for the year in meeting the Voluntary Service goals and priorities for the year. In March of this year a letter was sent to each member organization asking for a report of accomplishments. Twenty-five reports have been received and incorporated into the NAC Annual Report. Lt. Col. Mary Jones read the reports of accomplishments from the 25 member organizations. She encouraged everyone to continue the creativity and partnering with others in an effort to provide service to veterans through volunteer efforts.

**VAVS Report:** Jim W. Delgado thanked everyone for attending and expressed his pleasure in speaking of the accomplishments of the VAVS program and the contributions made to expand and to improve the quality of the program across the country. He asked that the VAVS staff in the room stand and be recognized.

(Applause.)



It was announced that for the first time VAVS produced and distributed the 2002 Voluntary Service Annual Report. He hopes that participants will take this document back with them to share with the membership of their respective organizations. This product is another tool to tell our story.

It has been a very productive year, and there is a great deal of accomplishment for us all to be proud of. Some of the accomplishments of the past year include:

The VHA Voluntary Service Handbook, 1620.1, was revised and distributed to all NAC members and field facilities.

The VAVS Recognition for State Veterans Home Volunteers, VHA Handbook 1620.3, was published and distributed to all NAC members and field facilities.

Distribution began of the Delphi Study to assess the training needs of our program participants -- volunteers, staff, VAVS Representatives and Deputies, and the staff who utilize and manage volunteers.

The reprint of *Faces of a Grateful* had been completed and distributed.

The work on the recruitment deliverables (the media kits, five brochures, and the recent four posters) has been completed.

The partnership with the Library of Congress has continued on the Veterans History Project, and the VA continues to support the goals and objectives of the Veterans History Project.

VACO continues to reinforce and maintain our very positive relationships with the veterans organizations, and participated in a number of national conventions of the VSO community.

The VAVS web page has been redesigned with a more contemporary look. The web site now allows individuals to log on and express their interest in volunteering. Their message is forwarded to the nearest VA facility with a copy to VACO.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, have renewed a sense of patriotism, of Americanism, a greater sense of caring and sharing in this country. We talk about freedom and its costs, and more importantly, our support for those who defend it. We have been tasked by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health, to develop a volunteer recruitment strategy to reach all possible resources. This event has also provided us an opportunity to tell our story and reach people who may have been apprehensive before, in participating in community service and in doing so, serve American veterans. VAVS will play an important role in the expectations of the White House and the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The resources are there, and we must be creative in developing interesting assignments. Everyone must be proactive, energetic, and enthusiastic in recruiting volunteers to serve America's veterans.

The charge last year was for each person to go out and recruit one new volunteer, and there has been some success. The data for the last six months shows that the volunteer force is no longer declining. Some VAVS committees have developed recruitment subcommittees. Recruitment tools have been distributed to all Annual Meeting attendees and are in the process of being distributed to each facility to assist to attract citizens to serve those who have served us. It is up to each one of us to support recruitment, retention and the exploration of opportunity for citizen engagement in the Voluntary Service Program.

In February a Recruitment Strategy Task Group was established. The members are Sabrina Clark, Chair, from Baltimore; Edgar Diaz from San Juan; Paul Gardiner from Lexington; Norma Velasquez from Orlando; Steve Stous from North Texas Health Care System in Dallas; and Deborah Brookshire from the Southern Arizona Health Care System in Tucson. They have been tasked with producing a recruitment plan.

The business and corporate community is like a "sleeping giant," with tremendous potential for volunteer opportunities, and it remains a priority.

Training for staff who utilize volunteers also continues to be a priority. The Delphi survey was developed and distributed. It is intended to provide some assessment of what the training needs exist for each of the constituencies in the VAVS program -- the volunteers, VAVS Representatives and Deputies, VAVS staff, and VA employees who supervise volunteers. Once it is completed, we will be on our way to developing training initiatives in a variety of formats to meet the critical need of training for everyone.

The background checks process is in place. The VA Medical Center at Bay Pines has piloted the fingerprint-only background checks, although a VA-wide policy has not yet been published. However, VHA is proceeding in recommending the use of fingerprint-only background checks in four specific volunteer assignments: (1) volunteers who have access to patient records; (2) volunteers who have direct patient contact in mental health; (3) volunteers who work with controlled substances in pharmacy assignments, or others; and (4) volunteers in home health care environments. Voluntary Service in Central Office will provide guidance and/or assistance if facilities are interested in implementing background checks for volunteers.

Another session of Professional Development and Training for the field staff will be held in Little Rock, Arkansas in mid-July. It is anticipated that this session will be video taped in order to provide another training tool for the program.

The web-based timekeeping package is currently under development, and the Alpha test at the Palo Alto Medical Center is anticipated to take place this summer. Marty Naugher will be available to demonstrate this new package at the Voluntary Service display. The most significant advantage of this web-based system is that the data will no longer go through Austin, which means that we will be able to rely on the data that is available at the VAVS facilities without additional processing of that information before it comes back to VACO in report form.

We are very proud of our accomplishments and the renewed emphasis from the various members of the VAVS program, and are encouraged for the future of the VAVS program. These accomplishments could not have been possible without the support, assistance and dedication of many people, and we're very grateful for that. Thanks are extended to each and every member of the NAC for leadership, stewardship and continued support, and the VAVS staff in the field for their continued commitment to doing the best job they possibly can. "Caring Matters" is the theme underlined in the recruitment posters, and volunteers prove that every day by what they do. We want to tell that story to others who have not yet been invited to participate. We will continue to do the best we possibly can for the most deserving population in this country, America's real heroes, America's veterans.

(Applause.) (Recess.)

Lt. Col. Mary Jones described the function and responsibilities of the NEC, and gave a brief overview of the NEC meeting of May 15, 2002.

## Subcommittee Reports:

**Recommendations Subcommittee:** Mr. Mike Manning read the recommendations pending action by the VAVS NAC during the 56th Annual Meeting. They will be voted on during the Business Session on Saturday, May 18. The recommendations were reviewed at the October 2001 EC Meeting and contain suggestions for NAC consideration.

**Recommendation No. 1 (Sponsored by AMVETS Auxiliary):** It is recommend that each chief have a minimum of one evening VAVS meeting so that new and younger members can attend to fulfill their duties as Representatives.

*The Executive Committee suggests approval.*

**Recommendation No. 2 (Sponsored by the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA):** At VAMCs and other VA facilities where VA staff and employees are provided with photo picture identification, volunteers (without-compensation-employees) should be furnished the same type of positive ID. This form of ID will not only add to the total security of all VA facilities where volunteers are serving, it, will enhance the overall well-being of both in- and out-patient veterans, VA staff and all volunteers. Furthermore, in cases where volunteers are serving veterans outside the VA facilities in the local committee and in veteran homes, the picture ID will give them legitimacy.

*The Executive Committee suggests approval.*

**Recommendation No. 3 (Sponsored by the Salvation Army):** There is a need for staff training in preparation for new volunteers at outpatient clinics. Volunteers who go to the clinics should have an opportunity for orientation on the premises, as well as a variety of available positions to serve the veterans who visit the clinics.

*The Executive Committee suggests approval.*

**Recommendation No. 4 (Sponsored by United Voluntary Service):** It is recommended that the VAVS should encourage member organizations to include as part of their organization's letterhead their complete telephone and fax numbers. This will help improve the flow of communication among organizations when dealing with VAVS issues.

*The Executive Committee suggests disapproval.* This is an organization policy issue. VA has no authority to mandate to member organizations what is to be included on the organization's letterhead.

**Recommendation No. 5 (Sponsored by United Voluntary Service):** It is recommended that each VA facility include as part of their facility letterhead their complete telephone and fax numbers. This will help improve the flow of communication between organizations and local facilities dealing with VAVS issues.

*The Executive Committee suggests disapproval.* Current policy exists in the VHA Handbook 1620.1.6.b.8.a.1, page 8, and in VHA Directive 2001-043(4)(d)(1) and (2), VAVS committee membership meeting and minutes.

**Recommendation No. 6 (Sponsored by Waves National):** Recommend change to paragraph 6 VAVS Committees, Subsection B, Facility, VAVS Committee, Number 6, Termination of Membership, to read "Certified members, representatives, and deputy representatives shall be removed from the VAVS committee when they have missed three consecutive meetings. The NAC representative of their national organization who reviews minutes of VAVS committee quarterly attendance shall notify the head of their local organization to contact those who have missed three consecutive meetings to see if there were extenuating circumstances that precluded their presence at the meetings. If they can be recommended again, then the NAC representative will so notify the Chief of Voluntary Service to reinstate them. If they can no longer meet the attendance requirement, their local officer must submit new names to the NAC representative of their organization. The NAC representative shall then notify the National Office to certify a new member to the facility director and Chief, Voluntary Service. If present members cannot be reinstated and no members are certified, the name of the organization shall be removed by the Chief, Voluntary Service."

Explanation of change: Would allow the NAC representative to have direct communication with the local leader to investigate why members have not met attendance requirement at their local medical facility and to see if they can or will improve their attendance.

*The Executive Committee suggests disapproval.* Current policy specifies termination of an organization, not individuals. Also, because minutes are not received in a timely manner, the process described would not be feasible. VHA Handbook 1620.1.6.b.6, page 7.

**Recommendation No. 7 (Sponsored by Waves National):** Recommend changing paragraph 6.b, Facility, VAVS Committee, Number 8, Meeting Minutes, subsection b.3, read "Officials designated by their organization to review quarterly minutes and cumulative attendance will be mailed only to the NAC representative that has their organization represented on the VAVS committee."

Explanation of the change: It would eliminate the NAC representative from receiving minutes from VAVS committees where their organization has no representative. If a service member has organized members in 30 facilities, they would only receive minutes from those 30 VAVS quarterly meetings. Some NAC representatives receive minutes from all VAVS committees for the 40 service member organizations. Some minutes received are from committees where their membership is not representative. It would reduce mail and paper costs for the VAVS Chief and reduce file space for the NAC representative.

*The Executive Committee suggests disapproval.* Current policy exists in VHA Handbook 1620.1.6.b.8.b.3, page 8.

**Recommendation No. 8 (Sponsored by Waves National):** It is recommended to make a change to paragraph 6.b, Facility, VAVS Committee, Number 9, Attendance, subsection d, to read "References to organizations and non-affiliated representatives who have not met the attendance requirement will be removed from the record when provisions of paragraph 6.b., Number 6, Termination of Membership, have been followed."

Explanation of change: To ensure cross-reference to method for removing organizations from the record.

*The Executive Committee suggests disapproval.* The termination policy is stated in VHA Handbook 1620.1.6.b.6, page 7, therefore, it would be redundant to restate it in a second section.

**Membership Subcommittee:** The committee consists of Ed Rose, Chairman; Marie Dunlap; Bill Bradshaw, and Rosetta Quartarone. There is no report from the committee.

**Recruitment Subcommittee:** Donna Tanner presented the report, covering the committee's mission statement, organizational structure, and SOP. The recruitment recommendations were reviewed in detail. It is recommended the committee focus on an action plan to be presented to member organizations for implementation. It should contain recommended strategies to retain and increase volunteers, how to disseminate information from the national organization to its local representatives and then back up to the national representatives, providing recruitment tools, a time line for implementation, and a strategy to evaluate efforts and their results.

**Veterans History Project:** Virginia Sorkin, program officer for the Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress made the presentation. This project is about individuals, about their personal experiences during war. This project started in 1999 when Representative Kind was talking to his father about World War II. Realizing that his father might not be alive to tell his story to his children, Representative Kind filmed the conversation. From that came the idea to introduce legislation that would capture individual histories of some of the 19 million veterans that are still alive across the country. The bill passed unanimously in October of 2000, and Congress is very enthusiastic and supportive of this project. Ms. Sorkin's office is seeking help in publicizing this project, and this group seems to be perfect to provide that assistance. In addition, it is hoped that VAVS volunteers, people who are at the grassroots level, will also be able to assist in conducting interviews. Not only from the veterans, but also from their families.

The legislation calls for the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress to collect audio and video tapes and original manuscript items (i.e., diaries, letters and photographs) and to make those available for posterity and for the public access. Release forms and instruction kits are available on the Web site. Brochures, with contact information, are available. This information that is gathered will be made publicly available via the Web site and by a searchable database. Ms. Sorkin played a video of veterans and took questions from an enthusiastic audience.

(Applause.)

Lt. Col. Mary Jones reviewed the schedule for the workshops and their locations. She announced that United Voluntary Service is sponsoring a coffee break this afternoon. The meeting was adjourned.

**BUSINESS SESSION**  
**Friday, May 17, 2002 - 8:30 to 10:00 a.m.**

**Call to Order:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones called the meeting to order and thanked AL and Auxiliary for sponsoring this morning's continental breakfast.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Capt. Donald Warriner, VAVS Representative, SA, Portland, led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Guest Speaker:** Tammy Kiker, from Federated Wholesale and sponsor of the guest speaker, introduced Mr. Barry Wishner who spoke on *The Power to Execute Change: How Volunteer Leaders Make Things Happen*.

Mr. Wishner's presentation was enthusiastic and motivating. He spoke about being a winning volunteer, which is a person who is good, ready and willing to execute change. Practice makes perfect, be a winner, stay a winner. The secret to winning in business is mastering and executing the fundamentals. And the most fundamental thing in the volunteering community is getting right person in the right assignment.

He outlined the fundamentals for the future of volunteerism, paralleling them with major corporations, thereby proving that they are the same.

Whatever worked in the past will not work in the future; take whatever you've done in the past and currently and put it on trial and re-evaluate. With the rapidly changing world we live in, it may be necessary to "re-pot" yourself every two or three years. Be open -- wide open -- to change; embrace it with enthusiasm. Don't lag behind.

Avoid isolation -- stay out there and be visible, find out what's going on. Communicate. Make yourself available to others. Listen to your volunteers. If you want to find out anything about your organization, just ask the people. Recognize the people in your organization. "Grow" the volunteers within your organization.

Be curious about the future. Anticipate the future. Change your strategies as changes in health care occur.

Charisma. It's a wonder what a little charisma, coupled with the other fundamentals, will accomplish with little or no other effort.

He termed volunteers as being in the "life enrichment business." They are in the business of "adding life to years, not years to life." It's one human being helping another. This is the message that needs to be disseminated to others. It's time to get the word out; go out there and toot your horn. "The Power of Packaging" equals a powerful partnership. Break with tradition, be innovative, have an ROI -- return on innovation, return on imagination. It's a whole new way of thinking. Create new ideas. Avoid "psychosclerosis," which is hardening of the imagination. The challenge is not finding new ideas; it's getting rid of the old ideas and implement the new ideas.

The top characteristic that successful CEOs have is persistence and focus. The word "impossible" is not in their vocabulary. They say, "Impossible is your opinion, not a statement of fact." Another characteristic is celebrating success and also celebrating failure. Failure is not a crime; failing to learn from failure is the crime. Good old hard work and risk-taking is another characteristic. Successful people are not lazy.

Successful people take risks. The next characteristic is integrity and trust. Integrity is to do what you're doing when nobody is watching. The successful executives dare to be different. Be different to attract those recruits. Become different -- be creative -- and get noticed. Dare to be Different. And then, the next step for volunteerism is to "Seize the Future." The future is very bright because there's 76 million baby boomers who are going to retire. This is a tremendously potential market.

Set your goals real, real high. How high is high? Boundaries are self-imposed. It's a mind-set. Everything is happening somewhere somehow; why not here, why not now? Then change your organization in order to meet those high goals because you cannot achieve the goals by running your organization the same old way. Avoid "robo-i-tis," which is doing the same thing day-in and day-out. Change your behavior, change your mind-set. It's the small things that make a big difference, day-in, day-out. In closing, Mr. Wishner's stated, "May each and every one of you find the gold within yourselves and your volunteerism to open up the doors of tomorrow."

(Applause.)

Lt. Col. Mary Jones thanked Mr. Wishner for his inspirational remarks and adjourned the meeting by thanking the The Salvation Army for sponsoring the coffee break.

**PARKE LUNCHEON**  
**Friday, May 17, 2002 - 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.**

**Welcome:** Mr. Richard L. Glotfelty, PVA, President, James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board, welcomed guests, stating that we are gathered to give recognition to youth volunteers who serve our veteran patients and to pay special tribute to our honored guest and recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award.

**Invocation:** Father William Wickham, Portland VA Medical Center, gave the invocation.

**Entertainment:** Mather School of Irish Dance, sponsored by the BPOE.

**Introductions:** The participants at the head table were introduced: Mr. Jim Dawson, guest speaker; Andrew Nagy, Parke Fund Board Member; Michael Manning, Parke Fund Board Treasurer; Lt. Col.. Mary Jones, Vice President of the Parke Fund Board; Margaret Haas, MCLA, Parke Fund Board Secretary; and Parke Fund Board Members Jean Thiede, EX-POW and Fred Burns.

**Keynote Address:** Mr. Jim Dawson, Director, Student Career Center, Lewis and Clark High School, Vancouver, Washington, entitled his presentation *Trends and Living Monuments, and Connecting with Youth Volunteers in Challenging Times*.

Mr. Dawson spoke of today's youth and the different challenges they have as compared to youth of previous generations. As a career advisor for high school students, he has discovered that when you work with youth, you find out there are no easy answers to the challenges they face. It's important, therefore, to look at some different perspectives of the way things are and work with them to make them feel they are part of a community, and give them the self-confidence to make good decisions that will impact their future. That's where volunteerism comes in. By connecting with people that share a common goal, it gives youth a sense of community and caring, not only in the giving of caring, but also in the receiving, and their overall

performance improves. Volunteering can assist youth in finding ways to achieve their functional needs. The present VAVS volunteers, by being mentors to youth, can achieve two goals in involving youth, one is increased service to the veterans, and secondly is helping a young person down the path to the future.

The VA Career Focus Program was developed specifically with this in mind and data reveals that attendance and grades improved, there was a significant increase in productivity, a visible increase in morale, and the students were more likely to graduate from high school. They become aware of themselves as a part of the world around them and start thinking about their own future, then as a result of that understanding, they are more receptive to learn about altruism. Altruism doesn't happen by accident; it's learned by example of working around people who are that way. That is where you, the mentors, come in. Along with altruism comes compassion, which is an emotion. If people are driven by emotion, that emotion can turn into things that are negative and ugly, or things that are positive and good. The difference between these two outcomes is how connected a person actually feels with the society within which they live.

In closing, Mr. Dawson quoted two Americans whose sentiments are the essence of his talk today. Mohammed Ali said, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." And John F. Kennedy stated that "Children are the world's most valuable resource and its hope for the future." Working together we can make these two statements mesh in a way that improves human lives and gives hope to everyone in the community.

(Applause.)

**Presentation of James H. Parke Scholarship:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones described the purpose of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship and how it was founded, how the nominations are received and the winners selected from among the many meritorious candidates.

Lt. Col. Jones announced this year's \$12,000 James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award recipient is Adam Brown of the Eastern Kansas Health Care System, an outstanding 18-year-old who has served more than 600 hours at the Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center in Topeka, Kansas. Rick Glotfelty and Lt. Col. Mary Jones presented the award to Adam Brown.

(Applause.)

**Award Recipient Comments:** Thank you. As Abigail Adams once said, "If we do not lay out ourselves in the service of mankind, whom should we serve?" For the past five summers I have volunteered at the Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center in Topeka, Kansas in the computer department. When Beth Brown, the Volunteer Coordinator in the Topeka VA, informed me in late March that I had received this honor, I was speechless. I would like to thank all the people on the James H. Parke Board for selecting me to receive this honor and Jim Delgado, the Director of Voluntary Services, for providing me the opportunity to volunteer my services at the VA Hospital, and Beth Brown for arranging my volunteering at the VA and for nominating me for this scholarship.

I'd like to take this opportunity to tell all of you a little about my time at the VA Hospital. I'd like to tell you how I became involved at the VA, a little about my experience in volunteering, and some about how I feel I can help the veterans.

When I finished my seventh grade year in 1997 I looked toward the summer to do something to help my community. Hearing first that the local public library was looking for volunteers, I went there to sign up. When I tried to do this, however, I was informed that at age 13, I was too young for their insurance to



cover me and would be unable to donate my time for another seven months. Slightly disappointed, I went to the Topeka Volunteer Center to see where I could volunteer. One of the places they recommended was the VA, as they have a library and could use help. At this point I met with Beth to find out where in the VA I could work. In this meeting I mentioned how I had a knack for computers. Upon hearing this, Beth sent me to the Information and Resource Management Services Department to work. For five years now I've volunteered in this department and I haven't once considered switching back to my original intent, the library, as I so enjoy the hours I spend at the VA Medical Center.

This time has provided me with an invaluable number of experiences. Not only has the VA been my first experience in a work environment, but I've also been able to work with so many wonderful people, both the employees and the patients. In addition to these, my time at the VA has provided me with many new skills and experience in the information technology field which will continue to help me as I go to college and beyond.

As a volunteer in the computer department, most of my time is spent either in an office working on repairing and building computers or running around the campus fixing problems on errant computers. By helping to provide the medical and administrative staff with the tools they need for reliable and efficient access to patients, I have helped veterans by applying my computer skills. Beyond this, I always try to be a receptive ear ready to listen to the veterans whenever I encounter them. As Abigail Adams said, "Who should we serve if not mankind?" I hope that by volunteering my time at the VA Hospital I have helped some of the most deserving of mankind, those who have given selflessly to their country.

This upcoming August I will be entering Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio seeking a major in computer engineering and a minor in Japanese. This scholarship has helped to make this possible and I would like thank all of you for this honor. Whether I ultimately work at the VA or just continue volunteering, I will be forever grateful for everything the VA has provided me. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Mr. Glotfelty announced the other two scholarship winners are Gabriel Anzueto (\$8,000) of the South Texas Health Care System, and Wendy Koegel (\$6,000) of the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System.

(Applause.)

**Acceptance of Donations:** Mr. Glotfelty, accepted contributions to the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund from various member organizations and others in attendance. It is through generous donations such as these that the scholarships are possible and that the fund will continue for years to come. Today's donations totaled \$25,426.

Mr. Glotfelty adjourned the meeting.

## **BUSINESS SESSION**

### **Saturday, May 18, 2002 - 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

**Call to Order:** The final Business Session of the 56th Annual VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by Lt. Col. Mary Jones. She expressed appreciation to Help Hospitalized

Veterans for sponsoring this morning's continental breakfast and announced that Mike Lynch, HHV, has made available sample craft kits.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** George LaFrazia, MCL, VAVS Representative for the Portland Medical Center, led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introductions:** Lt. Col. Mary Jones, introduced the participants at the head table: Mr. James H. Holley, Mr. Jim W. Delgado, Michael Wright, Chief, Voluntary Service, Indianapolis, host of next year's meeting; Mr. Mike Manning, Chairman of the Recommendations Subcommittee.

Lt. Col. Jones presented the Public Service Announcement video developed by the DAV featuring Paul Newman.

(Video presentation.)

**2002 Recommendations:** Mr. Mike Manning read the recommendations once again and after each recommendation called for a vote from the National Advisory Committee.

[The complete text of the recommendations appears under the Recommendations Subcommittee Report of the May 16, 2002 Business Session.]

**Recommendation No. 1 (Sponsored by AMVETS Auxiliary):**

Mr. Pat Cody moved to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Miriam Jaffee.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

**Recommendation No. 2 (Sponsored by the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA):**

Mr. Bill Bryce moved to accept the recommendation. Ms. Laverne Wozniak, PLAV, seconded the motion.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

**Recommendation No. 3 (Sponsored by the Salvation Army):**

Mr. Bill Bryce moved to accept the recommendation. Ms. Jean Thiede seconded the motion.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

**Recommendation No. 4 (Sponsored by United Voluntary Service)**

Mr. Andrew Nagy moved for disapproval of the recommendation. Ms. Miriam Jaffee seconded the motion.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

**Recommendation No. 5 (Sponsored by United Voluntary Service)**

Mr. George Culpepper, FRA, moved for disapproval of the recommendation. The motion was seconded.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

**Recommendation No. 6 (Sponsored by Waves National)**

Ms. Ruth Hammett, AWM, moved for disapproval of the recommendation. Mr. Bill Bradshaw seconded the motion.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

**Recommendation No. 7 (Sponsored by Waves National)**

Ms. Margaret Haas moved for disapproval of the recommendation. Mr. Ignatius M. Paolilla, CWV, seconded.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

**Recommendation No. 8 (Sponsored by Waves National)**

Mr. Del Turner, MOPH, moved for disapproval of the recommendation. Mr. George Culpepper seconded.

*Vote. The motion carried.*

Lt. Col. Mary Jones, announced that Mike Manning, Parke Fund Treasurer, reported that yesterday's donations totaled \$25,446.87, which brings the principal fund to \$496,096.65.

**NAC Volunteer of the Year Presentations:** This is the fourth year that the NAC has had the opportunity to recognize an outstanding male and an outstanding female volunteer.

The Female VAVS-NAC Volunteer of Year is Mrs. Veronica Spence from the ALA. Mrs. Spence has volunteered at the VA Medical Center in San Francisco, California for 35 years with a total of more than 20,000 hours. She serves as the office manager in Chaplain Service, and in addition to her duties there she decorates the chapel with flowers for every major holiday. She assists with the annual Women Veterans Clinic Luncheon and Recognition Ceremony and works with homeless patients at the American Legion Office in San Francisco. In addition to her regular assignments she also volunteers as the refreshment supervisor at the quarterly Employee Blood Drives, plans and coordinates the annual Christmas Gift Shop, the Reno Night, the Holiday Gift Distribution, and monthly bingo parties for veteran patients in the nursing home care unit, knits afghans and shoulder wraps for the patients, and caps for the oncology clinic. Mrs. Spence was named the American Legion Auxiliary Volunteer Award in 2001.

Mrs. Spence was escorted to the podium by Sheila Cullen, Director, VAMC San Francisco, and by Corbin Cherry, Chief, Chaplain Service, San Francisco, California. Mrs. Spence thanked Leslie Buchman, Chief, Voluntary Service, VAMC, San Francisco, California. The award was presented and photographs were taken.

(Applause.)

The Male VAVS-NAC Volunteer of Year is Mr. Herbert D. Rettke from the BPOE. He has volunteered at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma since 1993 and contributed more than 8,500 hours caring for inpatient veterans both at the medical center and the VA nursing homes. He is the first to arrive and the last to leave. He provides transportation to veterans, greets and provides complimentary refreshments to patients and families; he visits the donut shops and collects donuts to ensure that the volunteers have enough pastries to serve the patients and families for the next day. He works with the

Hospitalized Veterans program, specifically with those that bear the emotional scars attributed to the hardships and challenges of war. He plans and executes special activities for these patients, many to take place off-station, such as the Elk's Lodge and his own home. He provides clerical support to the Mental Health Services administrative staff.

Mr. Rettke was escorted to the podium by Ana Pinkson, Volunteer Coordinator at Oklahoma City, and his wife, Lynda Rettke. Mr. Rettke thanked his wife and expressed his gratitude in having received this highly prestigious award. The award was presented and photographs were taken.

(Applause.)

**VAVS Award for Excellence:** The Award for Excellence is recognition extended to the Voluntary Service Program Manager who exemplifies professionalism, commitment and dedication to the service of veterans in his or her management of the Voluntary Service Program. Mr. Jim W. Delgado presented G. Michael Coningham, Chief of Voluntary Service at the VA Bay Pines Medical Center, with the 2002 VAVS Award for Excellence.

Mr. Cunningham, who will be retiring shortly, thanked the committee for selecting him for the award and expressed that he has been honored by his association with the VA Voluntary Service, and saluted each member of the National Advisory Committee for what they've done for America's veterans.

(Applause.)

Mr. George Frye, Chief, Voluntary Service, Miami, and VISN 8 Liaison Chief, presented a gift to Mr. Cunningham, on behalf of the Voluntary Service Chiefs in VISN 8.

(Applause.)

**57th Annual Meeting:** It was formally announced that the 57th VAVS NAC Annual Meeting will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, April 30 to May 3, 2003 at the Radisson Hotel. Mr. Michael Wright, Chief, Voluntary Service, Indianapolis, described the hotel, the City of Indianapolis, showed a video, and extended an invitation for everyone to attend the 2003 Annual Meeting.

Lt. Col. Mary Jones announced that the refreshments for this morning's break are being provided by Laura Baak and Family in memory of Vietnam Veterans.

(Recess.)

**Keynote Speaker:** Dana Bowman, formerly a Special Forces soldier and member of the U.S. Army's elite parachute team, The Golden Knights, who, through a mid-air collision became a double amputee. Mr. Bowman re-enlisted in the Army and once again became a member of The Golden Knights. He spoke of his career in the Army and showed a video describing some of the things he did over his 20-year career, the accident, his recovery, and his accomplishments since then. Mr. Bowman spoke eloquently about what it means to be a survivor. He stressed that "it's not the disability; it's the ability" -- the ability to accomplish what some might think is the impossible. When he makes a presentation to a school by parachuting in, his goal is to be a role model by giving inspiration, hope to the despondent, courage to the timid, strength to the weak, and also the understanding that it takes tenacity to never quit, to never give up.

Mr. Bowman said that although his accident was indeed tragic, that his life has improved in so many previously unimaginable ways. He has learned a lot about himself and his capabilities. He has risen to heights he would never have thought possible, and he has learned to look beyond himself and to the people around him and seen what he can do for others. He pointed out that this group gathered here is a team, and a great one, comprised for the purpose of helping other people, helping America, and helping the world.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Bowman presented Jim Delgado, the Director, Voluntary Service Office, with a matted photograph of an event for disabled children held in Greenleaf, Florida, which bears the inscription "This just shows you that some people never quit. Keep your feet up, blue skies, and never quit."

**Closing Remarks:** By Mr. James H. Holley.

Thank you so much. Preceded by Dana Bowman this year, Richard Crenna last year. You know, I think Jim and Laura and all the conference planners just sort of get together and say, "Let's put Holley after any dynamic speaker we can find and watch him squirm."

Dana is something else, isn't he? I met him seven years ago at the Winter Sports Clinic. It was just fascinating to watch him not give up. He was, and is, an inspiration to other disabled veterans, and his story serves to remind us that no challenge -- none -- is insurmountable.

Before I get cranked up, I want to express my gratitude to the hosts, the sponsors, the planners, and the other contributors to this conference. Portland and Vancouver, thank you, we've had a wonderful time this week. Anyone who can corral this group (especially Mike) and make them sit still for three days has my deepest respect. I'd also like to thank my own staff that worked very hard to make sure you have a rewarding and enjoyable time here.

I'd especially like to recognize George Culpepper. Where is he? If you notice the bulge in his coat pocket, it's all the phone numbers that women under 30, and over 30, have been slipping him. I've been following him hoping he'd drop a few. George, I'd just like to thank you for letting me live vicariously through you for the last few days. George said something this week that caught my attention. This organization needs more young blood. Well, he's a shining example of that truth. But he was quick to add, because he's a pretty darned good diplomat, that we need the wisdom and experience of our older volunteers as well. He's right -- all generations, all working together.

So, who do we serve and what are their needs? I hope you've pondered that question since our opening session. Now I'm going to answer it.

*Veterans are another self-seeking interest group. Veterans probably would receive better health care if the VA hospital system were abolished. It's hard to conceive of anything more the Federal Government could do for veterans. It may be time to phase out some types of veteran benefits. Veterans have a separate welfare system. The veterans' lobby is a special interest group that already is so politically powerful that it gets virtually everything it wants. The truth is that nobody dares begrudge veterans anything.*

I bet I've got your attention now, don't I? Well, guess what. Those are actual quotes from editorials against making VA a Cabinet department. That was 14 years ago, but I saved them because I was flabbergasted by them. One misguided editorialist even wrote that if VA were upgraded to a department, it

would follow that there could be secretaries of senior citizens, secretaries of college students, of women, of national football league ticket holders, and of Star Trek fans. Then, in the very next breath, he claimed, "no insult to veterans is intended." In his opinion veterans are no more important than football fans.

Now, most Americans believe as I do, as you do, that those who serve their country in uniform deserve tangible recognition of that service. But there is another school of thought, and it's out there. That veterans have been given enough. You know, it amazes me that we rely so heavily on 535 individuals in one building to protect veterans' interests. Let's not place too many eggs in the congressional basket at the risk of overlooking national attitudes and perceptions. What is of consequence is the mood and the conscience of the American public. That's where attention should be focused, reminding America why veterans' benefits and helping veterans are important to America. And every administration through our remaining history will not have to be reminded; they march to the drumbeat of the electorate, the people. There is now a prevailing mood to provide for veterans, but what about the future? We can't take America's collective attitude about veterans for granted. It can easily change. You note those editorial comments from just 14 years ago? Well, that thinking is still out there. There are generations coming along behind mine that have little or no idea who a veteran really is or what he or she has done that deserves special entitlements or special federal programs. In fact, many could care less. And I'm sorry to say that there are some in every generation who feel this way, and you're kidding yourself if you don't believe it.

I say to those who have served, who have seen war in particular -- watch this example right here (pointing to Dana Bowman) -- particularly those who have tasted battle and who have lived its brutality: Your service is not up; you have not yet been discharged; you have an obligation to this and future generations to keep the memories and the images alive and vivid. We don't have to live in the past or the ugliness of war, but we'd better not forget it. That's why the Veterans History Project is so important. Those of us who are not veterans, must be right there with you making sure that America remembers. VA employees, first and foremost, have that responsibility. If you want to work for VA, you must be a veterans' advocate. If you are not, then you belong somewhere else. The process is natural. People forget, commitments fade, and programs die. But it's up to veterans, as individuals and organized groups -- it's up to all of us, VA employees and volunteers -- to deter that process.

The most serious problem facing veterans today is not access to health care. It isn't availability of benefits. It isn't budgets and backlogs. The most serious problem facing veterans today is identity. The best public relations veterans have are the events surrounding two days of the year. That leaves 363 days to remind the nation about our heritage and our defenders. And you're doing that in part through the Voluntary Service. You wondered where I was going with this, didn't you? By simply helping veterans, you're showing that they're not forgotten. And the more you draw other citizens in, the more the community sees what we do and who we serve, the larger the circle becomes. People helping veterans. Veterans sharing experiences. Stories kept alive. Veterans helping people. The nation growing stronger. History enriched. Corporations, youth, VSOs, civic organizations, the government and private sector, all working for a common purpose -- Veterans.

There are few other activities with greater opportunity to preserve the national heritage and the treasure of veterans' deeds than volunteerism in VA. It's not just about helping veterans; it's about helping ourselves individually and collectively as a nation. I heard someone just last week say that VA has the best mission in all of government. Well, I'd take it a step further. We have the most crucial mission in all of government as well, and we'd better not drop the ball. Volunteers help make certain we don't drop the ball.

Barry Wishner made a point in his presentation that struck me as our guiding force. If an activity is not adding value to the VA patient, eliminate it. I'd stretch that a bit -- everything we do, the reason we exist,

is for veterans. That is paramount. Enriching the lives of veterans, or, as he put it, "one human being helping another human being." And if every day we're not seeking new and better ways to serve these special human beings, then we are failing. The old ways alone will no longer suffice. Who do we serve and what do they need? Have that needlepointed and hang it in the hallway. That's what should drive us. Never miss an opportunity to remind any audience -- individual, small gathering, or a large crowd -- that the reason we breathe the sweet air of freedom is because a veteran gave it to us.

If you ever hear or see comments like those I mentioned earlier in a newspaper, on television, in a passing conversation, you be quick to remind those people that the only reason they can speak that freely is because a veteran gave them the right and protected it with their lives. That, too, is our job.

(Applause.)

And then, when you give them a good tongue-thrashing, ask them if they want to be volunteers.

VA Voluntary Service in Washington and in the field, you do a remarkable job. That annual report Jim Delgado shared the other day made me very proud. We are opening new doors. We are communicating. And we'll probably be doing it better after the presentation Annie Tuttle and Sharon Palmer gave in the workshop. We are showing that "caring matters." But never get too comfortable, never get too complacent. We have to change and we have to do more. New strategies, or as Barry Wishner put it, "cold pizza for breakfast every now and then instead of oatmeal" -- try new things. Listen to your volunteers. Talk among yourselves. Share ideas with each other within the facility and among facilities. We cannot be successful working in pockets, in isolation.

As Jim Delgado told you on Thursday, get ready. We have a Secretary and an Under Secretary who are watching, who will be actively involved in this program, and who are going to expect impressive results. We do this right and I get to come back and speak to you in Indianapolis next year. Your success is directly tied to my ability to eat. So my wife and I will be cheering you on. And we'll be right in the middle of it; not from the sidelines.

Wednesday night I referred to some promises and appeals I made last year in Tucson. Here they are.

To VA managers at every level, depend on Voluntary Service and our voluntary partners and support them. They will make you better. They have made you better. We will continue to hammer that message home to senior officials in CO and in the field.

To VAVS staff, if you need education, training and professional development, seek it. Ask us and we will work to find it for you.

Be creative; attempting to match a volunteer with a traditional job just might not work. Create jobs to use their skills. We have to accommodate them, not vice-versa. Sell those jobs to potential volunteers not as something we need done, but as something we have to offer. And look at the way we're delivering care, the way that is changing, to design new volunteer assignments.

To the National Advisory Committee, declining and aging memberships in some of your organizations does not wash as an excuse. Look at your ratios of membership to volunteers. You're doing wonderful things, but you can do more. We will work with you to find the ways. The dynamics have changed and we have to change with them.

And to all of us, I hope you are re-energized by this meeting. Strike now; next year it's too late. Barry Wishner told us we couldn't sit on the sidelines. This is your window -- this is your window. The potential is there. Patriotism is at a peak now. Capitalize on it. Use it.

Sabrina Coleman Clark reminded us this week that when we get tired, when things get difficult, when we face new challenges, it's pretty easy to forget the mission. It's pretty hard to forget it around Sabrina; she's quite a dynamo. What is the mission? Helping veterans. That's it -- helping veterans. And enriching their lives. Not our own agendas. Not politics and personalities. Not self-promotion. Not our own personal rewards. Not even to support the VA. Helping veterans, period.

A final thought. That video we saw Wednesday was entitled *Every War Has An End*. Our job is to make sure that memories do not. Citing the words of the song you heard in one of our workshops, "Deep within each heart there lies a magic spark. Your fate is your own creation." It's the moment that you think you can't that you'll discover that you can."

God bless you, and see you in Indianapolis.

(Applause.)

Lt. Col. Mary Jones commented that a lot of useful information has been shared this week that will be useful back home. In addition to the workshops and the presentations, the networking -- talking to each other -- is a rich source of ideas and information. She adjourned the meeting by inviting everyone to gather for the closing celebration commencing at 6:00 p.m. in the St. Helen's Ballroom. The celebration this evening is another opportunity to pay tribute to those recognized during the conference.

**Benediction:** Corbin Cherry, Chief of Chaplain Service at the San Francisco VA Medical Center, spoke to the group, thanking them for what they do, and led in the benediction.

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## **COMMUNICATIONS 101**

Faculty: Sharon Palmer, Public Affairs Officer, Little Rock, AR  
Annie Tuttle, Public Affairs Officer, Loma Linda, CA

Communicators are made; they're not born. This workshop provided basic tools for a person to pick the form of communication they're most comfortable with. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal and, actually, we spend our entire lives communicating, without realizing that's what we're doing. The process of communicating is trying to find a common ground between individuals or groups. Communication is like anything else, practice makes perfect, and the better you communicate, the more tools you have, and the greater the chance of getting people to listen to you.

There's a lot of competition for people's attention; the way you say something, the tools that you use, make a big difference in whether you are listened to or not. There's many ways to be heard, such as by using humor and props. Listen carefully to others, because listening is part of communication. Be honest and up front. Be aware and weed out the fact from the fantasy. Be forthcoming; for instance, negative news is better than no news. Know your audience. Know your message and know your facts. Keep it simple. Keep it short. Watch your body language, make eye contact, watch your tone. Tell it again and again and again. The more you repeat something, the better the chance that it will be remembered. Tell the story, over and over again not only verbally but also by written communication, such as newsletters. Communicate by creating opportunities for the general public to visit VA facilities by having an open house, an art competition, a healthy cooking contest, invite the neighbors to visit.

## **CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING**

Faculty: Gloria Jorel, Chief Voluntary Service, West Haven, CT.  
Laurie Harkness, Ph.D., Director, Errera Community Care Center  
Bob Janicki, Southern Bell Corporation/Southern New England Telephone,  
Corporate Volunteer

We must be creative and innovative in figuring out how to continue to provide quality care to our veterans. We must learn how to think out of the box. Approaching corporations is thinking out of the box. Understanding that the statement "all you have to do is ask" is a true and very effective, is learning to think out of the box.

A corporate partner is a business that has untapped resources. What the corporations have to offer is very broad in capacity, ranging from financial donations, which, for one thing, can be

leveraged to get grants, to the enthusiasm of their employees to participate in projects from food and Christmas drives to fundraising activities. The employees within corporations represent an extension to the regular VA volunteers and they feel a tremendous sense of pride when they can participate in a project. Besides financial contributions and people resources, there's equipment and supplies contributions, such as furniture, household items, or paint, as is donated by Home Depot. All you have to do is ask.

Why partner with corporations? Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. The people in this room are the seed for that committed and dedicated group, and the corporations, with their bountiful resources, can be the glue that binds it together. All you have to do is ask.

### **CAREER FOCUS PROGRAM**

Faculty: Sharon Appleman, Beaverton School District Coordinator  
Connie Givens, Vancouver School District Coordinator  
Gayle Cauthers, Voluntary Service Secretary, VA Portland, OR

VA Career Focus Program is a career exploration program begun in 1987-88 as the result of a partnership between Portland and Vancouver VAs as a community outreach program to meet the needs of both the VA Medical Center and the Vancouver School District. It's a program that enhances traditional education, which means it makes work experience relevant to what they're learning in their academic education. It provides opportunities for work experience for high school juniors and seniors from four high schools and it provides an opportunity for the VA Hospital to train and mentor top-quality students, creating awareness of an opportunity for future careers not only in the health field but other areas in the hospital. It's an experience-based education program serving a diverse high school population. The program initially targeted at-risk students, but it has evolved to allow career exploration for students in many different areas, as well as specific pathways. The program began with 27 students, it's now up to 90, and projected to be 130 students next year.

This program gives students a real world relevancy from the classroom to the work site, they earn occupational or vocational credit, they acquire basic employability skills, explore their career options, and it gives them a valuable exposure to volunteer service in the community. The benefits to the hospital are multiple and varied: it increases staff morale, frees up other volunteers and staff, provides a source of qualified job candidates, enhances public awareness of the hospital as a positive community member, contributes indirectly to individual patient care, and enhances delivery of services at the Medical Center. To place a monetary value on the participation of these students, this year the students volunteered 29,289 hours, which, calculated at a minimum wage, represented \$202,094.23. This program is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

## **SERVICE OR SACRIFICE: RECRUITMENT FOR THE FUTURE**

Faculty:       Sabrina Clark, Program Manager, Voluntary Service,  
                  VA Maryland Health Care System

This workshop gave the basic elements of an effective recruitment strategy, developed some tools for enhancing the recruitment strategy, and some pointers on how to deal with objection from potential recruits. As volunteers, we're all salespeople, selling the VA. Recruiting takes time and resources. Sometimes the resources are provided, and you don't know what to do and are afraid of rejection. Look at the challenges in recruiting to help you solve the problem, become aware of the challenges in your path. Plan in advance how to properly utilize the individual recruits in positions most suited for their skills. Time is valuable, and if you have a plan, you can use your time more effectively. Measure the results, or else you won't know if what you're doing is working. Pay attention to trends because it might indicate that your strategy needs to be changed in order to keep up with what's going on in society. For instance, right now the increase in patriotism. Keep in mind that you must be able to give an answer to the age-old question, "What's in it for me" -- WIIFM. Be prepared to personalize the benefits to the individual. Be prepared to be flexible and utilize people in the best way possible.

Even the economy is important in volunteerism. Look at the trends and adjust to them. Sometimes people out of work are willing to volunteer their time utilizing their professional skills, and sometimes these volunteer opportunities even lead to employment. An aging population provides a fertile territory for volunteers. There's competition for volunteers, so we've got to make our offer better. Just ask -- 63 percent of people who were asked to volunteer said yes. Many people who are willing to give will eventually volunteer. People involved in religious activities are more likely to volunteer. There's volunteer potential wherever you look.